

31 October 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE RECORD

SUBJECT: The Use of Doctrinal Warfare in a Political, Non-Military
Attack against the USSR: A Theory Outlined and Developed by
[redacted] before a CIA Audience on 20 October 1952.

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PRESENT: The list of those attending was compiled separately.

NOTE: 25X1A The following is not a literal transcript, but a summary prepared
at the request of [redacted] by a representative of SE Division
who attended the lecture.

I. The term "doctrinal warfare" is used in preference to "ideological warfare".
Essentially it is the same, but the term doctrinal is probably more accurate and avoids
some undesirable connotations of the older phrase. We are interested in the theory of
doctrinal warfare primarily as it bears on the Communist problem facing us. Communists
call it "propaganda"-written indoctrination--as compared with "agitation" or oral
proseletyzing. The well-known American impatience with ideas per se, not to speak
of "systems" of ideas, and our reluctance to read books are not shared by the elite
of other countries. On the contrary, it is both unrealistic and perhaps even dangerous
to underestimate the force that ideas frequently possess elsewhere in the world and
which the Communists have learned so well to exploit.

II. Doctrinal warfare is actually very old. By definition, it is an attack
through the medium of ideas on the motivation of a given target, which seeks to
reorient the target's will in a selected direction. In a sense, this is the ultimate
and decisive objective of all covert operations. We have many historical precedents,
some of which in their time proved to be decisive. At random, we might mention only
the Koran, the doctrines built up prior to and during the French revolution, Uncle
Tom's Cabin, Mein Kampf or a host of other examples. It is not now a question of
developing a complete system of attack but to examine some of the basic premises behind
the theory of doctrinal warfare and to find methods for its initial implementation.
We should be concerned at this point with laying the foundation or cornerstone of a
political non-military attack on the Soviet Union and its minions abroad. The present
discussion does not go into the matter of what our basic American message to the rest
of the world should be. It likewise does not seek to interpret doctrinal warfare with
respect to Europe (NATO), non-Communist Asia, the colonial areas or the Arab world,
even though this weapon can and should be used ultimately in those areas.

III. Why do we urge the use of Doctrinal Warfare? We know, for example, that
changes can be brought about in the policies of a given government through a number
of ways, -- by war, by revolution from below, by revolution from above and by evolution,
such as occurred in the United States under the Roosevelt administration. War as an
instrumentality for modifying the

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Revolution from below

Revolution from below must also be practically excluded, particularly in the case of a totalitarian Communist state with its iron-clad system of controls, unless these controls are sensibly weakened in the course of a war. Even in the case of a revolution from below, however, the first step in its organization is still the inculcation of a new motivation and the abandonment of former motivations. This is even truer in the case of a revolution from above or in accelerating an evolutionary change, both instrumentalities being closely if not entirely tied in with the development of a new motivation. Remember, we are not interested merely in an exchange of leaders who are seeking to replace others in the seat of power. What we must seek is a change in policy as well as leadership. If this is so, then we must devote special efforts

- (a) to elaborate the form and content of the message to be disseminated by our propaganda. Propaganda after all must have something to propagate!
- (b) to ensure that our message reaches through to the elite we wish to influence.
- (c) to ensure continuity and permanence to the message we wish to communicate.

We will return later to the importance of written propaganda.

IV. Who is our target? For our purposes, we should define our target as the enemy elite. While the word "elite" has an unpleasant sound in the ears of many Americans, it has an accepted sense which we would do well to retain in dealing with other countries. Moreover, the elite of a country consists always of those who actually wield the power as well as those existing on its fringes but whose collaboration with the rulers is essential to the smooth-running of the social machine. Likewise, the elite might be broken down into the small group of "ins" and the "outs", that is, those who potentially or covertly are in actual opposition to the ruling group. The latter may be more difficult to locate and contact, but in the last analysis they may be our ultimate target.

V. There are other good reasons why we have chosen the elite as our target. For one thing, the communications problem is minimized. By a variety of methods we can actually disseminate our message over their own communications channels. The elite can also be reached more readily than others, with greater opportunities for direct contact. Since the elite, by definition, has in many ways identified itself with the prevailing culture of the regime, its rationale is open to inspection and dissection. Intelligent criticism of the institutions and folkways with which the elite identifies itself will also induce a willingness to examine, to counter, and if possible to refute the criticism launched against them. The more difficult it is to refute the charges, the greater is the stress on the elite's credibility in the regime and its loyalty to its leaders. As we well know, motivation becomes especially

important in the case of an elite.

VI. The content of our motivating message might consist of such things as "Stalinism is old fashioned, a betrayal of basic principles", or "emancipation of the individual". Here we must pay particular attention to the use of such terms as "emancipation" which have potent historical overtones to a Russian ear. There are many such, and one aim of our program would be to select and apply with maximum force the words and phrases which have the most meaning for our target. This program should be regarded as an "open-ended" proposition, developing as we go along and as our day-to-day experience clarifies the direction we should follow. Our use here of the term "open-ended" is intentional. It would be a mistake to attempt to work out a priori and in detail what the content of our ultimate message is to be. We should not, therefore, be overly concerned ~~about~~ this at the moment. The primary task, which I would like to emphasize most strongly, is to get things moving in some direction as soon as possible. A problem much like that encountered in the case of an automobile caught in snow. We should, however, set ourselves the general task of modifying the inner cohesion of the Stalinist state in ways useful to our purpose. We must get new cleavages started in the intellectual and political climate of the country, or at least develop existing cleavages and stresses.

VII. The extreme vulnerability of the Communist system to this form of attack is an important factor we should always keep in mind. In a very real sense, the Communist must rely on persuasion, conviction and dedication. Communism is a mass phenomenon, as is the Democracy that we understand. It has its secret channels, its secret lines of command and control. But it also must rely on open media of communication in order to reach all of its adherents and to keep them active. If we cannot penetrate the hidden channels, let us at least make every effort to penetrate their overt communication channels! In this connection, there are, it seems to me, three important elements to consider. First, the Communists' own preoccupation with the question of doctrine and its interpretation. Second, the Communists are openly committed to the practical achievement of ideals which have not been, and are not likely to be, reached. And third, the Soviet Union itself has been steadily undergoing changes of a fundamental nature. Since these have now been codified at the recent Congress, they afford us a concrete basis for effective doctrinal attack.

VIII. In developing our concept of attack, we should first select our targets within the elite itself. These might be defined roughly as upper and middle party cadres, the non-party technical elite, the middle strata, the MGB etc. We should, as a general concept, seek to activate the middle strata, both party and non-party, on the fringes of power, paralyze the MGB, and neutralize other segments in the state

hierarchy. (I would like to emphasize here that this is in no way meant as a definitive approach to the very intricate question we are discussing. I am trying only to sketch in roughly what I believe to be the most profitable way of approaching our problem.)

IX. Earlier we discussed the matter of content. In other words, the question of themes. As a general rule, in addressing ourselves to real or potential disaffected and opposition groups we must seek out themes that are calculated to deepen their disaffection and also to suggest ways whereby the sources of their discontent can be eliminated. These suggestions should, of course, be the sort of thing that while they appear reasonable and good, they are basically unacceptable to the rulers, such as the idea of de-bureaucratizing the state, as an example. In attacking the cadres of hard-core Communists, we should try to reverse the process of sovietization at the expense of party ideals. Stalin must be equated with Hitler or with the worst of the Russian tsars. We should ridicule Stalinism as being strictly "old hat" and suggest ways of bringing "socialism" up to date. With respect to the present leadership of the Soviet Union, we might seek to influence them along the lines of intensifying what they are already doing and which has already served to alienate their subjects. Actually, in reaction to the pressures we may succeed in exerting on the middle strata, the rulers are likely to accentuate their present tendencies. In approaching this question of themes, there is no point in being too specific at this stage. All elements of doctrinal criticism must be brought out, however, in ways that would be convincing to ex-, present and future Communists. Possibly the most fertile theme might be that Stalinism is Leninism made quite unrecognizable and reactionary; it is hopelessly out of date, useful perhaps in 1927 but not in 1957. Our purpose is not to engage in dogmatic arguments of a scholastic nature, but to sidestep and overcome the old arguments in order to create a new intellectual climate that is more malleable to our intentions and dangerous to the men in power. Somewhat as occurred in the fight between the opponents and proponents of relativity or evolution, we should try to make them forget the old cleavages and to create new ones. We must set them "straight" about today and tomorrow.

X. At the beginning, I stated that we were faced by three problems: the form and content of our message, the getting-through to our elite audience, and finally, ensuring the permanence of our message. The written word is the chief and almost only weapon of doctrinal warfare as we conceive it to be. Certainly it is the first and foremost. From the earliest times, beliefs have had to be transcribed into permanent materials in order for them to survive and develop along lines consistent with themselves. It is the only method that forces thinking that has a lasting effect. Hence, our main

medium must be books,

- a. Doctrinal warfare must be waged globally.
- b. It must be directed against the Communist elites and must therefore be waged within the context of Marxism.
- c. Doctrinal warfare is the practical first step in a political, non-military assault on the Soviet complex.
- d. It is an "open-ended" affair that will evolve according to our experience, tools, and desires. It does not require, therefore, a definitive and specific definition at this time, before we have even begun to fight, so long as we can agree on certain basic premises.
- e. Its purpose is to inspire, accelerate and influence changes in the thinking within the enemy camp.
- 25X1C f. Its basic medium is the written word.

h. It is relatively quite cheap, but requires competence, a sense of organization and direction within the group charged with this mission, and above all, perhaps, imagination and a conceptual approach.

i. Since the development of a program of this nature cannot be carried out overnight, nor would its results be apparent for several years at least, the important thing is to begin now.

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REMARKS: Attached herewith is a precis of the lecture presented on 20 October 1952 by [redacted] on the theory of doctrinal warfare. This lecture was given in response to an initiative by [redacted]. The attached summary was prepared by SE Division as a matter of general interest at the request of [redacted].
 Also commentary by [redacted] on economic problems associated w/ USSR.

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